



Food Program Fact Sheet

Overview

Food safety is a top priority for the Spokane Regional Health District's Food Program. Over 2,000 retail food establishments in Spokane County are permitted and inspected to ensure Washington State food regulations are upheld. An additional 400 temporary food facilities are also permitted and inspected. The goal of the Food Program is to minimize the risk of foodborne illness to the community.

Facts about the Spokane Regional Health District's Food Program:

- Restaurants, grocery stores, school cafeterias, delicatessens, convenience stores, homeless shelters, churches and temporary food vendors at events such as Pig Out in the Park and the Spokane Interstate Fair, are all permitted food service establishments offering food to the public.
- Inspectors work closely with owners and employees to provide education and consultation, discuss food source issues, review menus and food service facility design or remodeling plans. A variety of educational materials are produced and distributed to food service establishments.
- Over 3,250 inspections were completed in 2001. Inspections are unannounced and performed according to the permit type. There are many different food service establishment permit types ranging from bakeries to mobile units to full-service restaurants.
- Food safety tips and educational information is regularly provided to the community. Public complaints about food service establishments and concerns about foodborne illness are investigated by Food Program staff, often in partnership with the Health District's Epidemiology Office.
- Over 12,000 Food and Beverage Worker Permits ("health cards") are issued each year to individuals who successfully complete the Food and Beverage Worker class, a requirement for employment in the Washington State Food Service industry. Four classes each week are taught by Food Program staff – three are located downtown and one in the Spokane Valley.
- The Food Program works closely with the local food service industry through its Food Advisory Committee, a group of 13 individuals who provide input about food program activities including fees and training needs.

Food Safety Partners Program

The Food Program recently launched the Food Safety Partners Program, a proactive effort by a select group of food service establishments to ensure a higher standard of food safety for their customers. Participating restaurants frequently monitor food temperatures and food handling techniques to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. About 50 restaurants are currently participating in the Food Safety Partners Program. A current list is always available on the Spokane Regional Health District's website at www.srhd.org.

Sample Fact Sheet

For More Information

For more information about the Spokane Regional Health District's Food Program, located in the Environmental Health Division, call (509) 324-1560, ext. 2.

About the Spokane Regional Health District

The Spokane Regional Health District is always working for a safer and healthier community. As the region's public health leader and partner, we are committed to excellence through innovative programs, community partnerships and a fundamental dedication to promote and protect the health of all Spokane County residents.

About the public health network in Washington

Public health agencies in Washington provide critical programs and services for all people in the state—from drinking water protection to disease prevention. The public health network coordinates at the local, statewide and national level to keep our communities healthy and safe. The work of public health includes:

- **Essential programs for improving health:** Programs such as immunizations, communicable disease prevention, and chronic disease and injury prevention help individuals and communities stay healthy.
- **Information that works:** Resources such as educational and training programs, community health reports and statewide health and safety information provide individuals and communities information they can use to make good decisions.
- **Protecting you and your family every day:** Services such as drinking water and air quality monitoring, septic system inspections, restaurant inspections, disease prevention and planned community crisis response ensure individual and community health and safety.